(iv) Appointment of Team of Observers/Nodal Officer to oversee fair conduct of Exams.

(v) Appointment of External examiners in addition to the internal examiners for the conduct of practical examinations.

(vi) Introduction of the concept of fictitious Roll Numbers for secret evaluation at different evaluation centres from October, 2001 Exams.

(vii) Accreditation of 26 accredited institutions of NOS which were involved in malpractices during the conduct of April/ May, 2000 Exam was withdrawn. Eleven other Examination Centres (Non AIs) were also blacklisted.

As a result of improvement measures initiated by the NOS, the total number of candidates involved in mass-copying has come down from about 6% (10206 out of 170401) in April/May, 2000 examinations to 2.78% (6004 out of 215276) in April/May, 2001 examinations.

Modern telescope in Laddakh

*130. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are thinking of setting-up of the world's most modern telescope in Laddakh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether approval of the Planning Commission had been sought for this purpose;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. The Indian Institute of Astrophysics is planning to set up a state-of-the-art large infrared optical telescope in Hanle, Ladakh, which is world's highest observatory for optical and infrared

astronomy. The telescope will have effective aperture of about 8—10 metres. A binocular telescope similar to Large Binocular Telescope, Mt. Hopkins, USA, is one design being looked into. Further details are being worked out. The Hanle site was identified during 1992—95 for the large telescope. It proved to be the best astronomical site in India and one of the best sites in the world. In 1997, the Government approved the 2-m Himalayan Chandra Telescope Project as a first step to prepare this remote high altitude site for the large telescope. The details on the preliminary design of the large telescope, the budgetary requirements of the project, and implementation strategy are being worked out. The proposal has been included in the Annual Plan 2002-2003 and Tenth Five Year Plan document of this Department for consideration and approval by Planning Commission.

Value addition to Maize

*131. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have under-rated Maize cultivation, in comparison to wheat and paddy;

(b) whether maize is being perceived as fit for cattle/poultry feed only; if so, whether Government would explore the possibilities of value addition to maize, to make it fit for human consumption;

(c) whether India has presently 6.3 mt/hectares of land under maize cultivation, yielding an annual crop of 11.5 mt. tonnes, with an yield of only 1.76 tonnes/hectare, as compared to 8.4 tonnes/hectare in US and Mexico; and

(d) if so, whether Government would propagate cultivation of hybrid/genetically modified varieties of Maize?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) No, Sir, Maize crop has been imparted the appropriate thrust by Government of India, both in terms of research and development under National Agricultural System by elevating the "Coordinated Research Project" to the directorate of Maize Research (DMR) and implementing an independent centrally sponsored scheme entitled "Accelerated Maize Development Programme (AMDP)" in which a